

## YULETIDE IN THE COUNTRY

Christmas Day in the Old Farm Home  
Recalls Fond and Pleasant  
Recollections.



CHRISTMAS in the country. Christmas day in the old farm home. What pleasant memories it recalls to some of us, and what good times it will mean for many of us this year. There is really no place like the farm home for Christmas good times and jollity and good cheer. Here, if anywhere, prosperity and plenty abound, and in family gatherings and in neighborhood reunions, with an abundance of the fruits of our labor with which to spread our bountiful boards, old friendships may be renewed, new ones made, and even the stranger within our gates may be added to the list.

At Christmas time we may put into practice the real principles of neighborliness. Living close together does not always make neighbors. Speaking acquaintances are not always neighbors. To be real neighbors we must have the spirit of neighborliness in our hearts which prompts us to get together once in awhile, to gather around a well-laden table and feast, and visit, and laugh and joke and have a rousing good time. To love our neighbor as we do ourselves, we have to know him pretty well, and there is nothing like these neighborly reunions as a means of getting acquainted.

It may be that some of us will have to do a little mental and spiritual housecleaning before Christmas day dawns. We shall have to rid ourselves of all the old rubbish of grudges, dislikes, jealousies and ill feelings which we will find pigeon-holed away when we begin to overhaul the accumulation of the years. You will have to throw all this into the discard before you can get into the real Christmas spirit, because the two will not mix. If you have wronged your neighbor in any way, Christmas is a good time to make reparation. And if you feel that you have been wronged, why, just forget it, and the Christmas spirit and the Christmas "get-together" will do the rest. Christmas should be a time of peace and good will to all mankind, and not to a few favored friends. It should be a time of reviving old associations, of renewing old friendships, and of making new friends, and the peace and good will, the neighborliness and good fellowship thus revived should not be allowed to die out as the yule fires cease to burn, but should flow out in a plentiful stream to enrich our lives through all the days of the coming year.

### A Christmas Sermon

TO BE honest, to be kind—to earn a little and spend a little less, to make upon the whole a family happier for his presence, to renounce when that shall be necessary and not be embittered, to keep a few friends but those without capitulation—above all, on the same grim condition, to keep friends with himself—here is a task for all that a man has of fortitude and delicacy. He has an ambitious soul who would ask more; he has a hopeful spirit who should look on such an enterprise to be successful. There is indeed one element in human destiny that no blindness itself can controvert; whatever else we are intended to do, we are not intended to succeed; failure is the fate allotted. It is so in every art and study, it is so above all the continent art of living well. Here is a pleasant thought for the year's end or for the end of life. Only self-deception will be satisfied, and there need be no despair for the despairer.—Robert Louis Stevenson.

### Cookie Rocks.

One and one-half cups of sugar, one-half cup of butter; cream. Add three eggs well beaten, three cups of flour, one teaspoonful of soda in a tablespoonful of hot water, one pound of dates cut in small pieces, three-quarters pound of shelled walnuts (one and a half pounds in shell), one teaspoonful of cinnamon, one-half teaspoonful of allspice. Break the nuts in large pieces and cut the dates about the size of raisins. Drop this stiff dough from a spoon on buttered tin in the size of walnuts. Bake in a slow oven.

### MERELY POSTPONED

Frank: So you didn't manage to catch Ethel under the mistletoe?  
Jack: That's all right. I'm going to take her for a sleigh-ride tonight.



### The Indian's Vigil.

In a book of sketches of upper Canada, a pretty incident is cited of the writer meeting an Indian at midnight, on Christmas Eve, during a beautiful moonlight, cautiously creeping along, and beckoning him to silence. In answer to an inquiry the Indian said: "Me watch to see the deer kneel; this is Christmas night, and all the deer fall upon their knees to the Great Spirit and look up."

## OLD AND NEW CHRISTMAS DAY

Nobody Has Been Able to Decide  
Whether January 6 or December  
25 is Correct Date.



CHRISTMAS day seems wedded to December 25. A summer or a springtime Christmas, with no holly, no mistletoe, no frost, no snow, would not be the real thing at all, observes London Answers.

The majority of our beautiful Christmas carols, too, redolent as they are of the winter—"Sung Amid the Winter's Snow"—would be hopelessly incongruous. Emigrants to Australia from the mother country have confessed that it has taken them many years before they could get in any way used to what is practically a mid-summer Christmas.

Yet December 25 is merely an accommodation date for the birthday of Christ—Christmas day. The year, too, is wrong. Most people would take it for granted that Christ was born in A. D. 1—literally, of course, the year of our Lord, No. 1.

But our chronology is four years out. This should be 1925 and not 1921, because Christmas day could not, on indisputable historical testimony, have been later than February B. C. 4!

That settles the year of the first Christmas, but all attempts to fix the actual day and month of Christmas have failed.

And, as regards the present date, Christmas, like Easter, took some centuries before a settlement was arrived at. In the first centuries of Christianity several important Eastern churches observed January 6 as Christmas day. The Armenian Christians do so still.

Gradually, however, uniformity was attained, but not before the fifth century. In that connection it must be remembered that for quite a long period this country was divided on the question of Christmas. Some people persisted in observing "old" Christmas day.

But all will agree that December 25, even if it is not the actual date of Christ's birth, is a happy choice. Our present-day Christmas, festival and holiday, breaks the long winter, and what better time could there be for family reunions? The cold and unpleasantness outside make it all the more agreeable to keep warm and snug inside. It keeps us together in every sense.

### THE CHRISTMAS TREE CUSTOM

Use of the Young Evergreens Is Regarded More as a Matter of Sentiment, Not of Economics.



EVERY year some mathematical calculator figures out that this country would be several billions richer if, as a nation, we abolished the good, old custom of the Christmas tree. Yes, in actual dollars and cents valuation of our natural resources the United States probably would be more wealthy for the continued growth of the evergreens. However, we believe no better return ever came from trees than the true joy which all mankind gets from Christmas trees at this the greatest of all holiday seasons.

Nearly 5,000,000 young evergreens go upon the Christmas-tree market each year, 1,500,000 in New York and the New England states alone, and it is an easy matter for an enthusiast who is quick with the pencil to figure up the waste in our natural resources by the annual loss of this embryo timber. The economic consideration is not entirely indefensible, for in the Northeastern states particularly a big proportion of the trees come from pasture land or that which would be cleared in the ordinary course of improvement. Later, these trees would be cut anyway. Of course, wholesale destruction over watershed areas should be discouraged as in any forestry activity, but it must be remembered that the Christmas-tree custom is one of sentiment, not of economics.—American Agriculturist.

### Honey Drop Cakes.

One cupful of sugar, two cups of honey, one-half cupful of shortening, four eggs, two cups of milk, two teaspoonfuls of vanilla, one-half teaspoonful of salt, four cups of flour, four teaspoonfuls of baking powder. Cream the honey, sugar and shortening together; add well-beaten eggs and vanilla; sift dry ingredients and add alternating with the milk. Mix well; bake in greased muffin tins. These are good if flavored with chocolate, using four squares of baking chocolate or ten tablespoonfuls of cocoa for this large recipe. They are good uniced.

### Christmas.

If we were to fancy a wholly Christianized world, it would be a world inspired by the spirit of Christmas—a bright, friendly, beneficent, generous, sympathetic, mutually helpful world. Let us cling to Christmas all the more as a day of the spirit which in every age some souls have believed to be the possible spirit of human society.—George William Curtis.

### Toys Made in Sweden.

Toys are manufactured to a considerable extent in Sweden and are almost entirely the finer kinds of painted wooden toys. Their making was formerly a house industry, but of later years the great bulk of the output comes from a few factories.

## Story of the Christmas Stocking



YEARS and years ago stockings were not hung on Christmas eve as we hang them now. No one ever heard of such a thing as hanging up a stocking for Christmas gifts. And if children had thought of such a thing they would have said, "What a foolish idea! A stocking wouldn't hold half the things we want." So the children throughout the world placed crocks, big brass basins, and copper kettles on the hearth on Christmas eve and left notes in them telling Santa to fill them to the brim. Each year the children left larger vessels to be filled, children left larger vessels to be filled.

Up in the great white north Santa's reindeer no longer pranced and pawed, impatient to be off on Christmas eve, as they once had done. They hung their heads and a tired look came into their big brown eyes, for they remembered how heavy the loads had grown and how many more trips they were forced to make year by year.

St. Nicholas no longer rested now through the summer months, as he once had done, but labored every day throughout the year, and often he built toys late into the night, for a great many gifts had to be made to fill the baskets that the greedy children left. The twinkling left his merry eyes, and he no longer sang about his work, for he was sad and thought of the time that would come when he could no longer build enough presents to go around.

Late one December day St. Nicholas stepped from his workshop into the deep snow. Facing the south, he stretched out his tired arms and called: "Hear, oh hear, children of the earth, my loved ones, can you not see you are becoming selfish and that your greedy demands are too great a task, even for St. Nicholas, king of the Christmas spirit? Can't you see, my children, that you are killing the spirit of Christmas?"

His chin sank upon his chest and tears glistened in his kindly eyes. A soft white snowflake fluttered down and nestled against his cheek, and a tiny voice whispered into his ear: "Santa, I will help you."

"Who are you?" asked St. Nicholas. "I am a snow fairy," answered the tiny voice. "As my sisters and I have danced about the air we have often swirled about your sleigh on Christmas eve, and have seen the great loads you have always carried and how tired you have looked."

"What, O what, shall I do?" asked Santa. "Just go about your work as usual," answered the fairy. "I and all my sisters will help you."

"Oh, thank you—thank you," cried St. Nicholas. And the fairy floated out among the other snowflakes.

As the children went about the snowflakes whirled around them, and it seemed as if they heard the chanting of tiny voices, and as the snowflakes nestled against their ears they seemed to sing: "Just a stocking—hang a stocking up on Christmas eve."

"Just a stocking—just a stocking," rang through the hearts of the children on Christmas eve. And in place of leaving the great vessels as they once had done they just hung up their stockings.

Some children were too selfish to hear the song of the snowflakes and left the great baskets as they always had done. But when they saw the great joy the unselfish children had in their gifts and how contented and happy they were these selfish ones were ashamed, and they, too, began to hang up only their stockings when Christmas eve came round.

When St. Nicholas found stockings in place of the great baskets and barrels the twinkling came again into his laughing eyes, his cheeks grew red, and he sang as he drove through the merry sea of snowflakes.

With just stockings to fill St. Nicholas had time to rest, and he grew strong and well, and the spirit of Christmas lived. So this is why nowadays we hang up our stockings on Christmas eve. All this we are told by a writer, who learned it from a Christmas fairy.

## Santa Fetched Her



## The Empty, Raggedy Stockings

What of the empty, raggedy stockings That will hang by the chimney on Christmas eve, With their muzzles open to the poor little women To the dear old Santa in whom they believe? For their share of his presents they ask such a little, Just a dolly to hold in my arms while I sleep, A little tin auto that runs when you wind it, A sounding red drum or a woolly white sheep.

The only light in their dim, dark existence Is that wonderful day when old Santa will come With his treasure filled pack that he brings on his back From his fairyland, snowland, toyland home.

What beautiful dreams will come to them sleeping Under the coverlet shabby and worn; But what of the empty, raggedy stockings That will hang by the chimney on Christmas morn? MRS. H. C. SEARCY, in the Chicago Tribune.

## CHRISTMAS DOES NOT STAND ALONE

IF CHRISTMAS stood alone it would be an idle mockery. But it does not stand alone. It is part of a year. Yet it is a peculiar part. It is that brief period in which the child rules the world.

It marks nowadays the culmination of a civilization which has had a leading principle. The selfish, the hard, the grasping and the unspurring are out and apart that one week from the great flowing tide of the development of the world's progress. The man or woman who does not know this or see it or feel it is alien to the Christian spirit and to all the products wrought by the Christ spirit in the twenty centuries last past.

Christmas day, then, brings a message. But it also sings a song of hope and calls aloud a prophecy. The message is that gentleness is stronger far than force and that the greatest power on earth is the compelling power of tenderness.

Every Christmas tree is lit with that light. The great flood of presents bears this as its message. The cheer and charity of the whole season are fed by this love.

If the result of this process is only a century flower, however, or one that blooms even only once a year, then of what use is this more than that, this grotesque fact that that stranger plant? It is a curious phenomenon only, a hothouse spectacle and not an abiding food product.—Rev. Dr. David M. Steele, Philadelphia.

### CELERY AND CHEESE SALAD.

Chop nicely bleached, tender celery fine and bind it together with mayonnaise. Line an ice cream dipper with cottage cheese, then fill up with the celery mixture, packing it in well. Screw out the cones on crisped lettuce leaves arranged for individual serving.

Re-re

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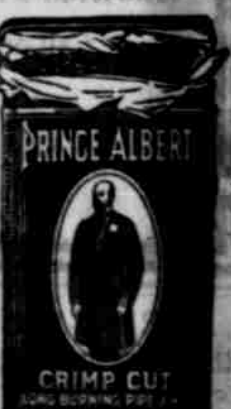
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